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Tyler Junior College

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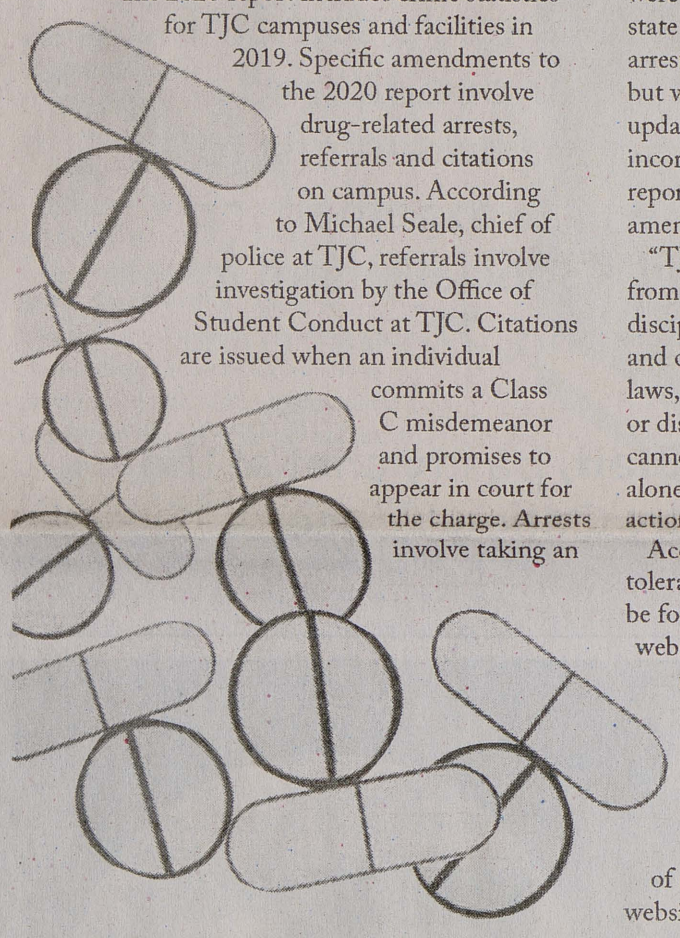
SAFETY REPORT

TJC updates 2020 drug-related statistics

By Madison Heiser
Editor-in-Chief

Tyler Junior College revised its 2020 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report on March 16. The annual report is required by federal law under the Clery Act, which requires transparency between college officials and students regarding crime on campus, according to the Clery Center.

The 2020 report includes crime statistics for TJC campuses and facilities in 2019. Specific amendments to the 2020 report involve drug-related arrests, referrals and citations on campus. According to Michael Seale, chief of police at TJC, referrals involve investigation by the Office of Student Conduct at TJC. Citations are issued when an individual commits a Class C misdemeanor and promises to appear in court for the charge. Arrests involve taking an individual into custody and booking them into jail for any offense under Texas law.



According to the report, drug-related arrests increased from seven to 10. Drug-related referrals on campus decreased from 31 to 10. Drug-related referrals in campus housing facilities decreased from 24 to nine.

Only violations of state law are required to be included in the annual safety report, according to Seale. The 21 drug-related referrals that were removed from the report were only violations of campus policy, not state law. Additionally, three drug-related arrests were initially classified as referrals but were counted correctly as arrests in the updated report. Seale said these arrests were incorrectly classified as referrals in the initial report and were updated for accuracy in the amended report.

"TJC's drug-related policies are different from state/federal laws in that one can be disciplined for drug-related usage, possession and distribution. Under state and federal laws, one can only be charged with possession or distribution," Seale said. This means one cannot be criminally charged for drug use alone, but the college can take up disciplinary action against individuals caught using drugs.

According to Seale, TJC has a "zero-tolerance" drug policy on campus, which can be found in the student handbook on TJC's website. If a student violates this policy, they will be summoned to the Office of Student Conduct to answer for their actions.

This zero-tolerance policy also applies to student housing as outlined in TJC's Housing code of conduct handbook on the college website. According to Steve Logan, director of Residential Life and Housing at TJC, violations of campus drug policy generally result in removal from the residence halls as well as disciplinary action from the college's administration. Although responses to drug policy violations are similar among residential students, Logan said each situation is investigated and adjudicated individually. Seale said each student under investigation will be temporarily removed from their residence hall, but if found to be in violation of campus policies, they will be permanently removed from TJC housing facilities.

Students who violate campus drug policy as well as state law are also subject to legal action, in addition to disciplinary action from the school's administration. According to Seale, "if one breaks state and federal law, officers will use their discretion and take action based on the circumstances and what is allowed by law."

Consequences for drug law violations range in severity depending on the infraction, according to the annual safety report. Possession and/or delivery of marijuana may result in a monetary fine of up to $50,000 and/or jail time between 180 days and 99 years. Possession, manufacture and/or delivery of controlled substances (other drugs such as cocaine, heroin and narcotics) can result in similar punishment, but the maximum monetary fine is set between $10,000 and $100,000 depending on the infraction.

"Violations of state and federal laws can result in fines, incarceration, community service, and other forms of punishment given

Report continued on Page 3

These graphics are intended to represent drug-related issues and do not necessarily reflect the substances found by TJC police as documented in the 2020 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report.

Graphics by Mary Mone

TJC enrollment drops during COVID-19 pandemic

By Madison Heiser
Editor-in-Chief

Tyler Junior College is among many U.S. community colleges and vocational schools whose enrollment has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although TJC's total enrollment did not see a significant decrease between fall 2019 and fall 2020, the college faced an influx of online enrollment as the 2020-21 school year began.

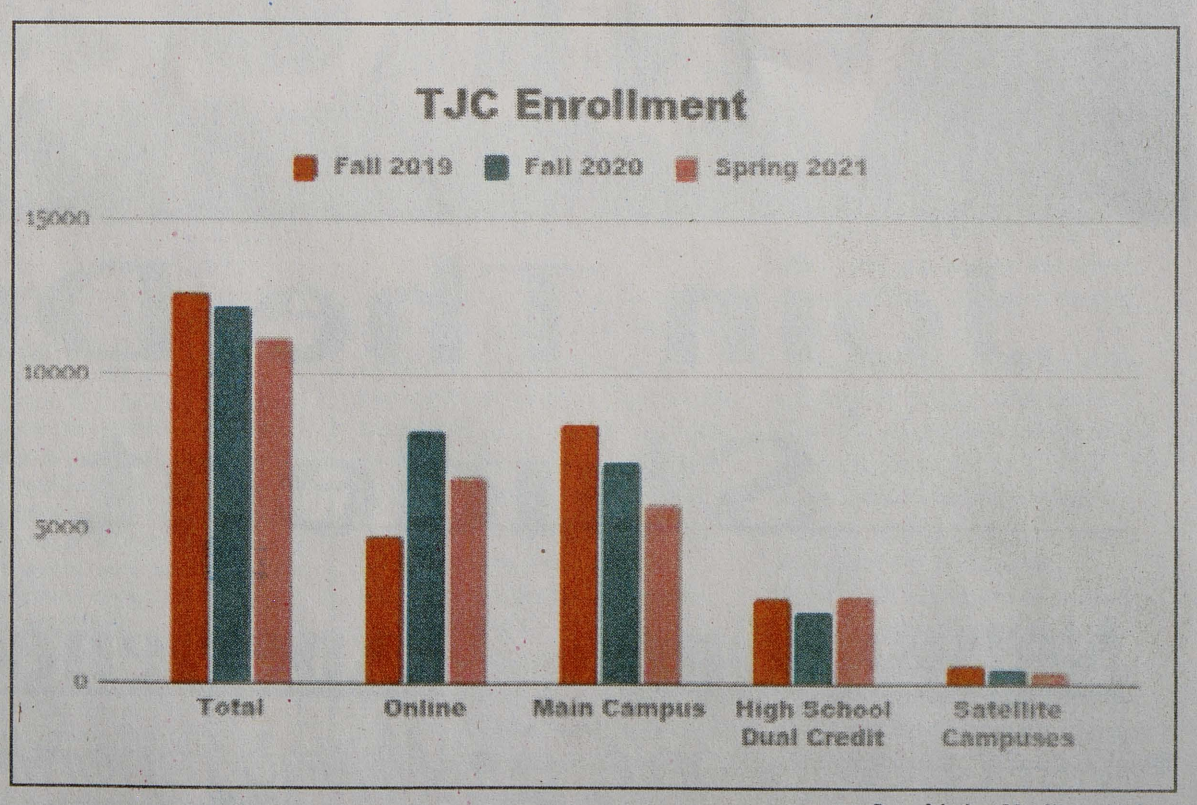
According to TJC Registrar Britt Sabota, the school had a total enrollment of 12,651 students in fall 2019. By fall 2020, that enrollment decreased by nearly 500 students to 12,154. Between fall 2019 and fall 2020, internet enrollment nearly doubled from 4,770 to 8,172. By these numbers, 38% of TJC's fall 2019 enrollment were online students. In fall 2020, this percentage increased to 67%. Sabota said the sum of TJC's enrollment at its main campus, off-site instructional locations and online will not equal the overall institutional enrollment. This is because students may be enrolled at more than one location or online, simultaneously. TJC's total enrollment numbers reflect the overall institutional unduplicated headcount.

"We expanded fully online offerings," Sabota said. "Our faculty teaching online courses were provided with expanded training for Canvas, Zoom and other technology platforms to ensure they have been well-prepared to offer online students a high-quality and engaging instructional experience." According to Sabota, TJC offered 548 online course sections in fall 2019. This number increased to 839 in fall 2020.

TJC freshman Genesis Baze said she opted to take online courses this semester to work and attend school simultaneously without exposing her family to COVID-19.

"I think COVID made my first semester extremely hard," Baze said. "I felt like I just went to class and my room, and there wasn't much going on at school."

Sabota also said some classes were converted to hybrid courses that combine online and in-person instruction. According to Sabota, "all in-person classes have been assigned to a classroom that provides for 50% or less capacity." Additionally, in-person classes have been held at all available times and days of the week to minimize density in classrooms. According to the TJC website, the college has offered students "TJC Your Way," which allows flexibility in combining in-person, online and hybrid classes to provide students with the educational experience they desire while promoting public health and safety.



Graphic by Madison Heiser

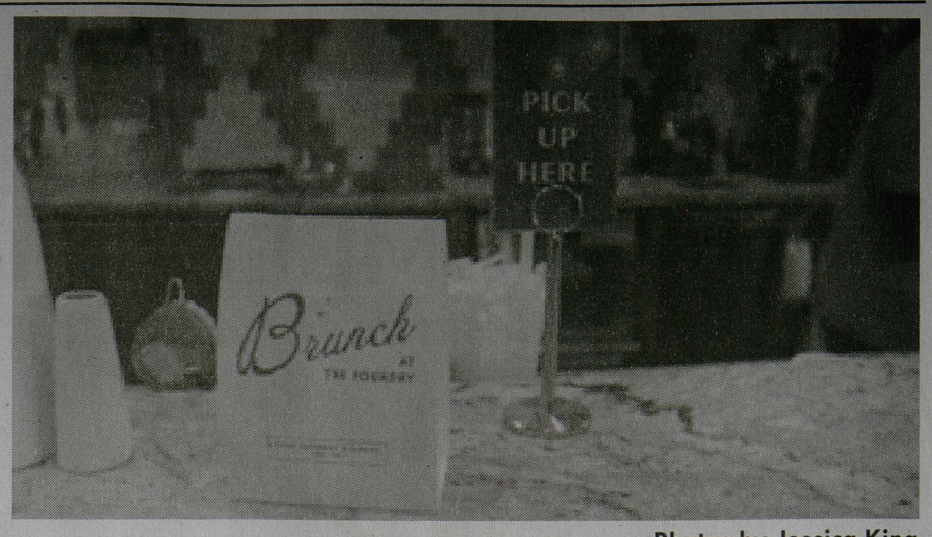
This data reflects the enrollment numbers at TJC during the fall 2019, fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters. Total enrollment numbers reflect the unduplicated headcount of students across all campuses and programs.

Despite these accommodations, TJC saw a larger decrease in student enrollment between fall 2020 and spring 2021 than it saw between 2019 and 2020 fall semesters. This semester, TJC has a total enrollment of 11,166 students – a drop of nearly 1,000 students from last semester. Both internet and main campus enrollment, which make up the majority of the school's student body, saw respective decreases of more than 1,200 students between fall 2020 and spring 2021.

According to the Associated Press,

Enrollment continued on Page 3

The Foundry Coffee House serves up weekend brunch



Photos by Jessica King

Just in time for summer, brunch has arrived at The Foundry. The coffee shop offers pick up orders for the consumer on the go.

By Jessica King
Staff Writer

The Foundry Coffee House has invited the Tyler community in for a weekend brunch from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday.

"We wanted to do something really fun for people and something different just to bring people together and bring in a specialty item for the weekend," Aria Blair, pastry chef at the Foundry Coffee House, said. According to foundry-coffee.com, "From the seed in the ground to the coffee in your cup, The Foundry is all about relationships."

"Our intent of having a brunch is people are usually hanging out with their friends and family on the weekend. We offer a flatbread that is like a shareable piece and we really wanted to incorporate that instead of something individual, we wanted to bring in like more of a community thing," Blair said.

Blair began her journey as the pastry chef at the Foundry in June 2020 and has been baking ever since. The menu she has curated for weekend brunch includes: paleo donuts, vegan energy bars, snickerdoodles, three cheese quiche, ham and swiss quiche, gluten, free vegan carrot cake, jamon and guyere croissant, spanakopita hand pie and fig, and feta cheese flatbread.

"I like making the gluten-free vegan carrot cake because I have food allergies myself, and I really like reaching people that can't have treats or find treats as easily," Blair said.

According to Blair, The Foundry has always offered a wide selection of pastries, however, opening up for a weekend brunch has benefited its business because it has allowed brunch and lunch type of pastries to be incorporated into the menu.

Holly Graves, a barista at The Foundry, said her favorite part of working the weekend brunch is "it usually brings in more of a crowd and so there is more opportunity to talk to people."

"It's like a little special party on the weekend," Blair said.

For more information about The Foundry Coffee House or their weekend brunch, visit foundry-coffee.com.

The Foundry offers a variety of pastry alternatives. From vegan energy bars to juice cleanses, they have become a one stop shop for healthy living.

A barista creates latte art out of steamed cream. The Foundry has professional baristas in Tyler to ensure a quality cup of joe.

> "We wanted to do something really fun for people and something different just to bring people together and bring in a specialty item for the weekend,"
>
> **-Aria Blair,** pastry chef at the Foundry Coffee House

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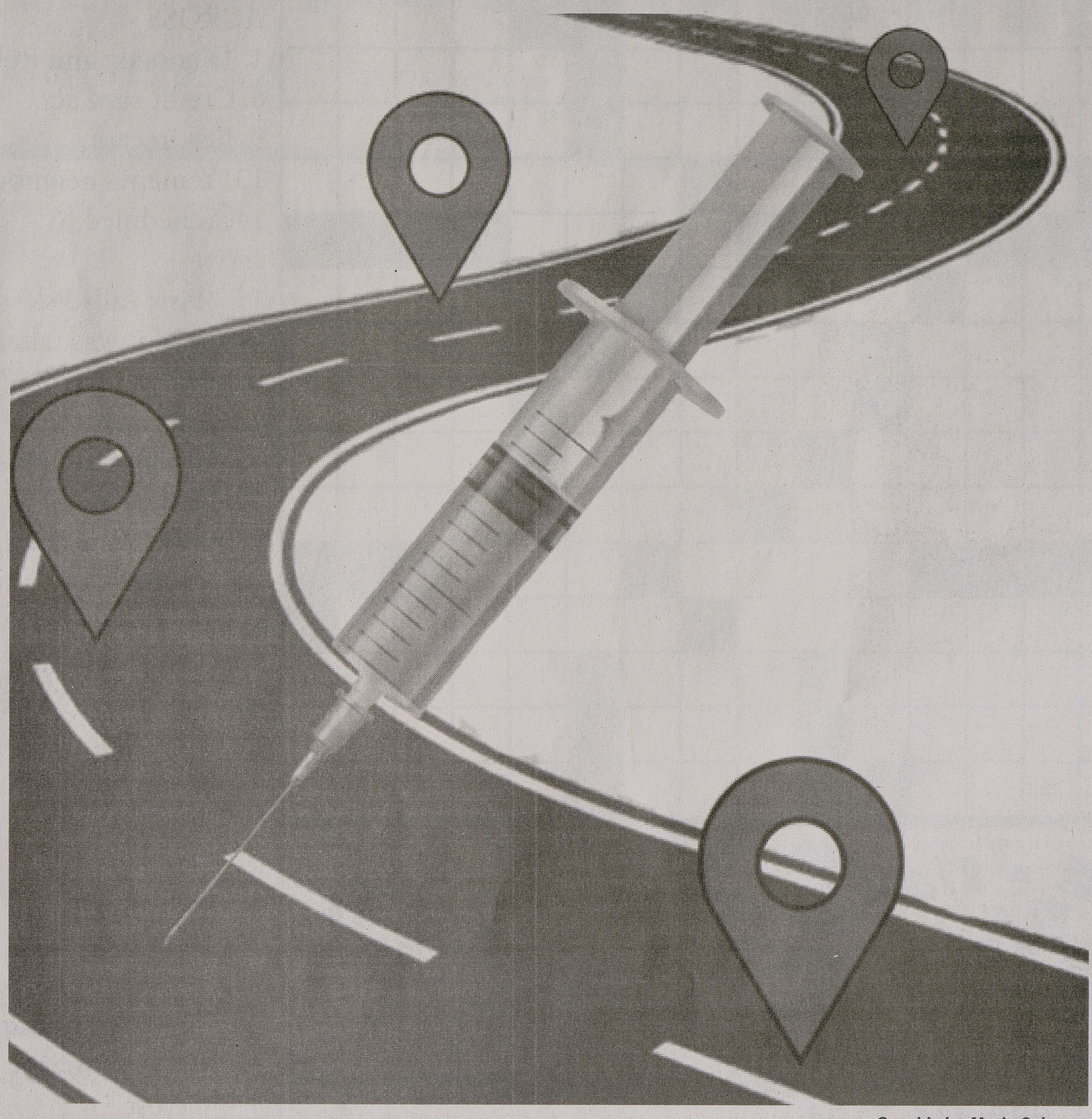
COVID vaccines open to adults 16 and older in Texas

By Mary Mone
Online and Copy Editor



Graphic by Marie Salazar

Brookshires, Walmart, Christus and UT Health are a few of the locations providing Tyler, TX with vaccines for COVID-19.

The Texas Health and Human services Commission announced by March 29, everyone age 16 and older would be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Texas. They say all vaccines are allowed for people 18 and older, but only the Pfizer vaccine is authorized for people 16 and 17. The locations providing the vaccine include CVS, Walgreens, Brookshires, Walmart, Christus, UTHealth, and many other clinics.

In a statement released online by CVS Pharmacy, they are taking appointments online and that getting the vaccine is free. "We're administering the vaccine by appointment only based on local eligibility guidelines. No cost with insurance or through federal program for the uninsured."

As of noon March 29 , all CVS Pharmacy's vaccine appointments were fully booked in Tyler, Tx. There are availabilities in surrounding cities, and that availability can be checked on their website.

Walgreens is also providing COVID-19 vaccines and to schedule an appointment in Tyler, there are three simple steps. First, make and sign in to your Walgreens account, complete an eligibility screening and then schedule the appointment. As of March 29 , there is appointment availability, but

At Brookshire's they are administering the vaccine by appointment, as well. Though they have a long waitlist and aren't currently available, their website says they have plans to begin scheduling again. "Brookshire Grocery Company is proud to be one of the first retailers to provide the COVID-19 vaccine to the communities we serve. We ask for your patience as the vaccine supply is currently very limited and our pharmacies are working diligently to administer the vaccine to the designated groups, per state guidelines."

Walmart has also begun distributing the COVID-19 vaccines. Although there are no Tyler stores providing the vaccine according to their website, they provide them in different East Texas cities. Some students may have access through their hometowns.

Among retailers, there are clinics holding appointments for the vaccine administration. Christus Trinity Clinic in Tyler started early in their efforts. According to an article on KLTV that was posted on March 27, "All Texas adults are set to be eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine come Monday." Also included in the article, it is mentioned how CHRISTUS Trinity Clinic in Tyler got a head start and held a vaccine clinic that was open to all adults. To see about appointment availability, contact the clinic at (903) 593-8441.

Along with Christus Trinity Clinic in Tyler, UT Health is distributing vaccines. In an article on KLTV's website, it says that, "UT Health East Texas opened additional COVID-19 vaccine appointments for anyone 16 and older. Vaccines will be given by appointment only." Vaccine appointments can be made online at signupgenius.com/go/ut. For people who are without internet access, the phone number 903-747-4VAC (4822), can be called from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday to get a vaccine appointment. "The vaccines will be given at UT Health North Campus Tyler, 11937 U.S. Highway 271," according to the KLTV article.

There are many smaller clinics in Tyler that are providing the vaccine and to see which one is closest, visit dshs.texas.gov/covidvaccine/. There is a map they have with all the locations and availability.

Report: Punishments vary by offense

From Page 1

by the court. Violations of TJC policies can result in fines, community service, substance awareness classes, suspension, expulsion, eviction, or other forms of approved disciplinary action by the Office of Student Conduct or Residential Life," Seale said.

To access the 2020 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, as well as other campus reports regarding crime and COVID-19 cases, visit tjc.edu/campuspolice/reports.

Common Texas Offenses and Punishments

OFFENSE/AUTHORITY	MINIMUM PUNISHMENT	MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT
Manufacture or delivery of controlled substances (drugs) Health & Safety Code § 481.113	Confinement in State Jail for a term of not more than 2 years or less than 180 days. In addition to confinement an individual may be punished by a fine not to exceed $10,000.	Imprisonment in the Institutional Division of TDCJ for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 10 years, and a fine not to exceed $100,000.
Possession of controlled substances (drugs) Health & Safety Code § 481.115	Confinement a State Jail for any term of not more than 180 days. In addition to confinement, an individual may be punished by a fine not to exceed $10,000.	Imprisonment in the institutional division of TDCJ for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 10 years, and a fine not to exceed $100,000.
Delivery of Marijuana Health & Safety Code § 481.120	A fine not to exceed $2,000; confinement in jail for a term of not more than 180 days; or both such fine and confinement.	Imprisonment in institutional division TDCJ for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 10 years, and a fine not to exceed $100,000.
Possession of Marijuana Health & Safety Code § 481.121	A fine not to exceed $2,000; confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days, or both such fine and confinement.	Imprisonment in the institutional division of TDCJ for life or for a term of not more than 99 years or less than 5 years, and a fine not to exceed $50,000.
Driving While Intoxicated (includes intoxication from alcohol, drugs, or both) Penal Code § 49.04, 49.09, and 12.34	A fine not to exceed $2,000; confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days or less than 72 hours; both such fine and confinement.	Imprisonment in the institutional division of TDCJ for any term of not more than 10 years or less than 2 years; and by a fine not to exceed $10,000.
Public Intoxication § 49.02	A fine not to exceed $200. Attendance at an Alcohol Awareness Course.	A fine not to exceed $200. Attendance at an Alcohol Awareness Course.
Purchase of alcohol by a minor. Consumption of alcohol by a minor. Possession of alcohol by a minor. Alcoholic Beverage Code § 106.02, 106.04, 106.05	A fine not to exceed $200. Performance of Community Service for not less than 8 or more than 12 hours. Suspension of driver's license for a period of 30 days. Attendance at an Alcohol Awareness Course.	Upon third conviction: a fine of not less than $250 or more than $2,000; confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days; or both the fine and confinement. Performance of Community Service for not less than 20 or more than 40 hours. Suspension of driver's license for a period of up to 180 days. Attendance at an Alcohol Awareness Course.
Sale of alcohol to a minor. Alcoholic Beverage Code § 106.03	A fine not to exceed $4,000; confinement in jail not to exceed 1 year; or both such fine and confinement.	A fine not to exceed $4,000; confinement in jail not to exceed 1 year; or both such fine and confinement

Chart courtesy of 2020 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report

The chart above shows the common Texas Offenses and Punishments for people convicted of a crime. These are standard protocols for how to deal with the degrees of punishments.

Enrollment: Drops nationwide, evidence suggests mental health, COVID as reasons

From Page 1

community college enrollment was hit the hardest by COVID-19 compared to other colleges and four-year universities. Nationwide enrollment at community colleges dropped 10% overall between fall 2019 and 2020, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. Undergraduate enrollment at four-year universities dropped a comparative 4%.

The decrease in enrollment can be attributed to the increased amount of homebound individuals during the pandemic, especially older students with families, according to AP. Although community college enrollment typically increases during economic downturns, COVID-19 has uniquely affected this trend due to financial instability, changing family obligations, and the effects of anxiety and depression among students.

According to AP, advocates for community college attendance hope the enrollment downturn is a temporary response to COVID-19. Some officials estimate when college campuses begin to reopen and operate at full capacity, enrollment will return to normal rates similar to those seen before the pandemic.

"I never understood why people don't consider community colleges more," Baze said. "Why would you pay $17,000 in tuition to get the same education you're going to get at a community college? I guess when I'm 30 and don't have debt and they do, then I can say, 'I told you so.'"

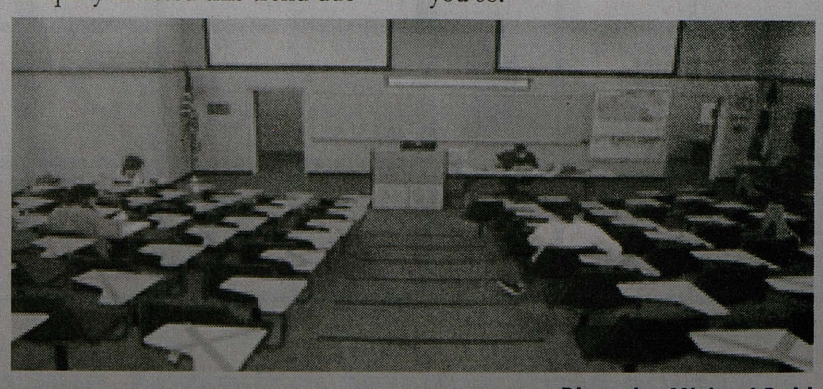
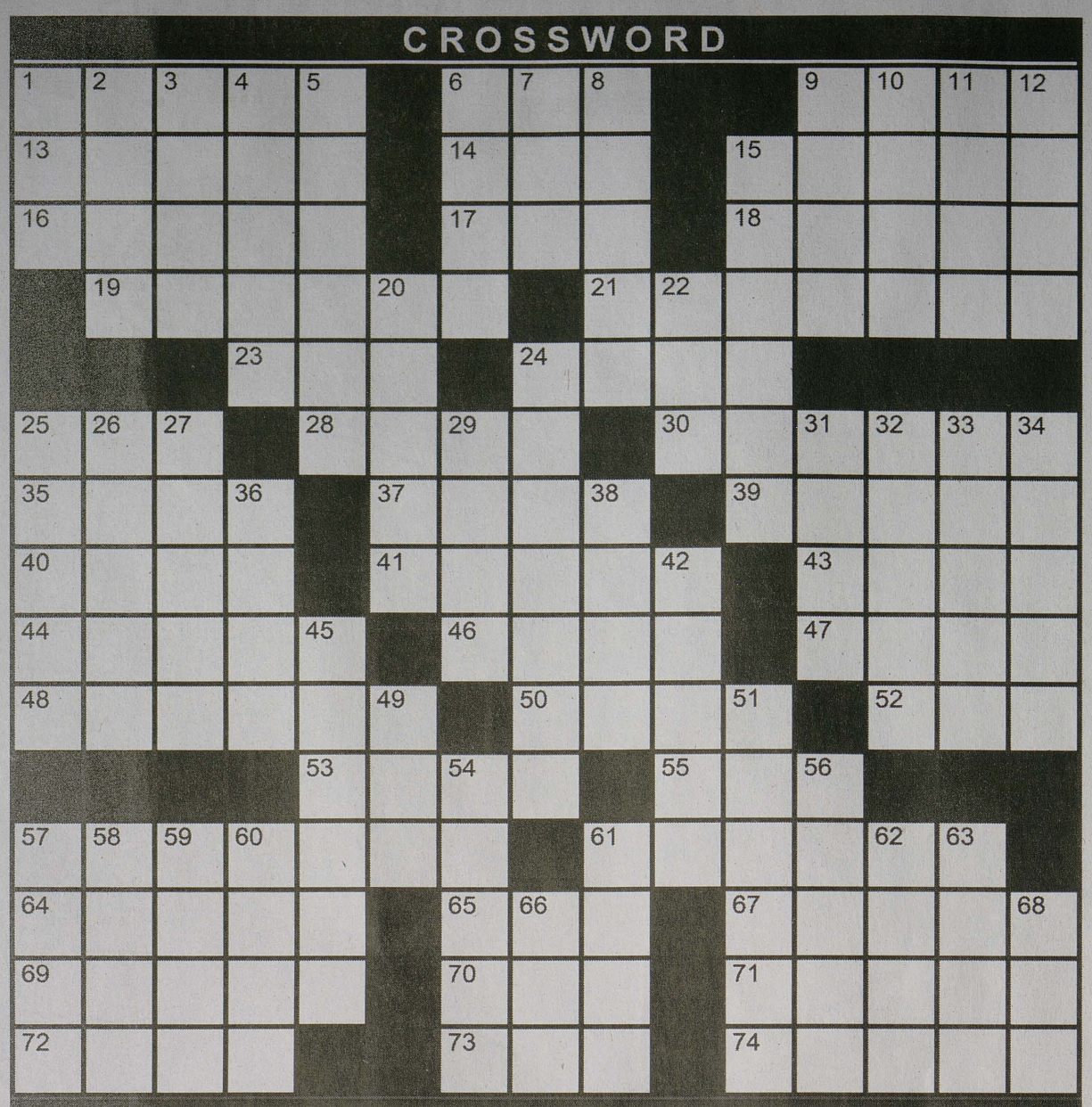


Photo by Michael Bald

Jenkins 1109 classroom hosts testing with few students present. According to TJC Registrar Britt Sabota, 67% of TJC students were enrolled online in fall 2020.

THEME: The 1960s

CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1. *Kennedy and Ruby
6. Credit card acr.
9. Just in case
13. Yemeni's neighbor
14. Scheduled to arrive
15. *First full-disk image of it was taken in 1966
16. Alleviated
17. Wildfire remains
18. One born to Japanese immigrants
19. *"Catch-22" author
21. *Oscar-winning leading lady of "Mary Poppins"
23. Green or black beverage
24. Piercing woodwind
25. Mom in U. K.
28. ____ and drab
30. Good-for-nothing
35. *TV's Batman, ____ West
37. Figure skater's jump
39. Make happy
40. Hitchhiker's quest
41. *"Wilt the ____"
43. Femur, e.g.
44. Cut it out
46. Away from port
47. Largest organ of human body
48. Like anti-cruelty society
50. Same as #42 Down
52. Even, to a poet
53. Roaster's spot
55. *It's the loneliest number
57. *Sam Walton's company
61. *Haircut popularized by the Beatles
64. Relating to axis
65. PC brain
67. *Sting Ray and Mustang, e.g.
69. Threshing hand tool
70. *"On ____ Majesty's Secret Service"
71. Dostoyevsky's novel, with The
72. Seaside bird
73. Tibetan ox
74. Condemn

DOWN
1. *Hasbro's G. I.
2. Same as ayah
3. Four six-packs
4. Genuflected
5. Sashayed
6. Month of Purim
7. Abscess contents
8. Repair
9. Bear's den
10. Gaelic tongue
11. Meat and potato dish
12. Not that
15. Take to one's heart
20. ____ Grey and James ____ Jones
22. Noggin or dome
24. #24 Across players
25. *____ on Washington
26. Farewell in Paris
27. Address to a woman
29. Just a little
31. Young socialites, for short
32. Call forth
33. *Barbara Eden starred as one
34. *First American astronaut to orbit the Earth
36. Table in Spanish
38. Type of bargain
42. Best not mentioned
45. Ultimate goal
49. Slightly pointed on a Hobbit
51. Pro bono
54. Scratchy's nemesis
56. Chopin piece
57. Drift
58. Rod for a hot rod
59. One with pants on fire?
60. Street in Anytown, USA
61. Darkness or gloom
62. Relating to ear
63. Poverty-stricken
66. Cause of Princess' downfall
68. Pig's home

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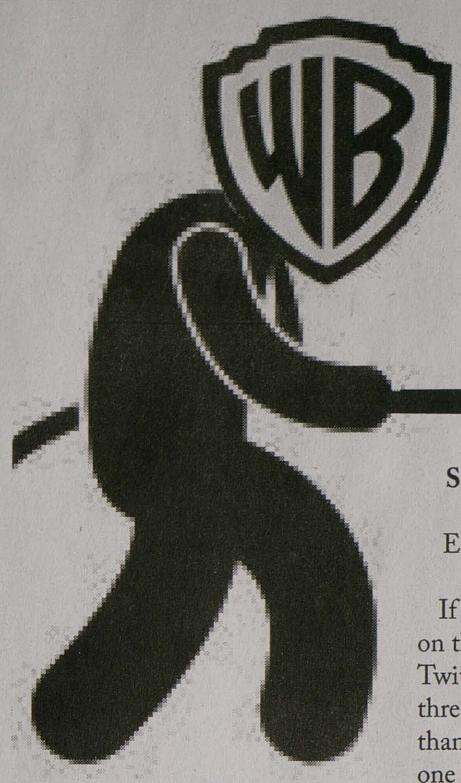
Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Crossword and Sudoku solutions will be online at thedrumbeat.com.

Director's tug of war

Fans', director's three-year fight for creative vision



Story and graphic by Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

If you've had an eye on the movie side of Twitter in the past three years, you've more than likely seen at least one call to arms to #ReleaseTheSnyderCut. At first, it seemed we had another situation of simple studio interference, but as years went by and more information came to light, Zack Snyder's departure and return to the "Justice League" project is more complicated than anyone initially thought. So, let's take it from the beginning.

After the poor reception of 2016's "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," it seemed worrisome for the already ongoing production of Snyder's next DC endeavor, "Justice League."

Fast forward to May 2017, Snyder leaves the production of "Justice League" in the wake of a family tragedy. Snyder told The Hollywood Reporter, "The demands of this job are pretty intense. It is all consuming. And in the last two months, I've come to the realization... I've decided to take a step back from the movie to be with my family, be with my kids, who really need me. They're all having a hard time. I'm having a hard time."

Following Snyder's departure, Warner Bros. Pictures brought in Joss Whedon as director to bring the project together for theatres. At the time, that is all we knew. In fact, Toby Emmerich told the same outlet, "He's handing the baton to Joss, but the course has really been set by Zack." Leading those watching the situation to believe that Whedon was only there to wrap up production. Oh, how wrong we were.

Less than a month later, Danny Elfman replaced Snyder's usual composer, Junkie XL. Shortly after, reports of Whedon's multiple rewrites and reshoots began to surface, seeding more doubt as the movie's release approached.

"Justice League" hit theatres Nov. 15, 2017 middling critical reviews; eventually leveling out at 40% on Rotten Tomatoes and 45 out of 100 on the site Metacritic (it should be noted that these sites are aggregate sites, meaning that they gather a general consensus of critic's reviews across the internet). The film's theatrical run also only produced $229 million domestically against the film's $300 million budget. Even after making over $650 million worldwide, "Justice League" still performed lower than any previous film in the DC Extended Universe, let alone compared to "The Avengers'" $1.5 billion 2012 run.

Fan reception was less than favorable as well, with disappointed DC fans rallying online for a release of the original director's vision. A week after "Justice League's" release, an online petition in favor of the "Snyder Cut" garnered over 130,000 signatures.

According initial reports and interviews, Snyder's cut of "Justice League" was practically impossible to finish and nowhere near a working cut. But, by January 2018, more production information surfaced.

In January 2018, fans found a post from Snyder's Vero account revealing he was working with Stefan Sonnenfeld as intermediate digital colorist for "Justice League" in February 2017. This struck fans as odd, because that colorist's job, color grading, is typically done after "picture lock." "Picture lock" means the initial cut of raw footage has been cut down and assembly has begun for final setup of scenes. While this does not mean the film is done, it does mean shooting should be finished at this point and edits to shooting have been completed.

It is possible Snyder just wanted to do some color testing, but when looking at the fact that he shot "Justice League" on 35mm film, that process becomes much more difficult to do during shooting. Again, leading many to assume Snyder's cut of "Justice League" was at least near completion, making Whedon's countless reshoots and additional rewrites seem increasingly unnecessary.

Fans continued to comb Snyder's Vero page, finding more screenshots of moments and characters completely absent from the theatrical cut of "Justice League," leading to more calls to #releasethesnydercut.

By February 2018, longstanding entertainment reporter Josh Dickey announced via Twitter, "Zack Snyder was fired from the DCEU just over 1 year ago," directly contradicting the conception of Snyder only walking away from "Justice League" of his own volition. Despite this and other corroborating reports, Ben Frits, a senior executive for Warner Bros., told The Wall Street Journal in July 2018 the studio had no plans to release "any alternate cut" of "Justice League."

After months of fan explosion online, Snyder began to speak publicly about his cut of "Justice League," specifically that it clocked in at a staggering 214 minutes long compared to Whedon's 120 minutes. Considering the rewrites, reshoots, and double the runtime, fans were now fully convinced the "Snyder Cut" was a completely different movie.

As testament to the "Snyder Cut" fans drive, two of them organized a fan funded "ultimate statement" at 2019's San Diego Comic-Con, including a banner, billboard and Hollywood Reporter ad calling for the release of the "Snyder Cut."

After the Comic-Con coverage, celebrities began jumping on the Snyder wagon. On Aug. 18, 2019, "Aquaman" himself, Jason Momoa, posted on Instagram, "The Snyder cut is ssssiiiccccckkkkkk #luckymesucksforu," furthering "Snyder Cut" confirmation online. The same month, walking hockey jersey and nerd culture extraordinaire, Kevin Smith told CinemaBlend's "ReelBlend" podcast, "I've spoken now to enough people at various levels in that production. There is a Snyder cut. For sure. That's not a mythical beast. It exists." By November 2019, actors Ben Affleck, Gal Gadot and Ray Fisher tweeted out "#ReleaseTheSnyderCut."

On Dec. 4, 2019, Snyder hushed speculation with a Vero post of canned film reels saying, "Is it real? Does it exist? Of course, it does."

Deep into the COVID-19 pandemic, Snyder announced after a May 20, 2020 virtual screening of "Man of Steel" that his director's cut of "Justice League" will officially be released on HBO Max. And the rest, as they say, is history. Following that announcement, fans were given the August 2020 first "Snyder Cut" trailer, scored to Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," confirming the 2021 release.

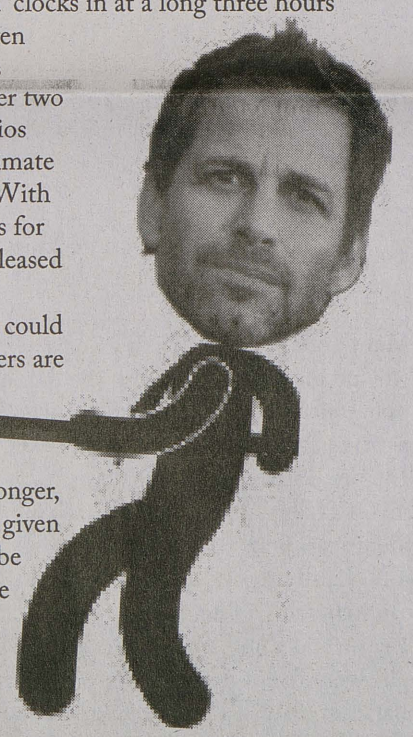
After almost four years and countless fan posts, we can see the tragedy of what happened here. In the wake of a family tragedy, Warner Bros. took what was practically a finished product, hired a new director, new composer, new color artists and changed what was their original director's vision.

This is something that sadly happens time and time again in Hollywood. Go back to Ridley Scott's 1982 sci-fi landmark, "Blade Runner" and you'll see a similar situation in which the studio did not trust Scott's vision of a dystopian future neo-noir. So, behind his back, they made cuts and edits, even going so far as to record a voiceover from Harrison Ford. The studio cut bombed in theatres critically and financially, many specifically calling against Ford's halfhearted narration. Only after years and repeated proven failures was Scott allowed his director's cut, which is now known as the one definitive cut.

This pattern of studio interference has seen a rise in recent years, especially when it comes to superhero movies. With Josh Trank's troubled "Fant4stic" production, "Suicide Squad" being given to a trailer company to cut together, and numerous others, the "Snyder Cut" gaining enough traction to make it to HBO Max does offer a chance to stop this.

Before the advent of streaming services, studios pushed films to be as close to the 90-minute normal runtime as possible, so they can screen it in theatres as many times as possible to maximize profits. This has made it practically impossible to get a new idea for a film out there that pushes past the feared two-hour mark. But, if the "Snyder Cut" performs well with its streaming release, we could see a new filmmaking future.

Slowly but surely, services like Netflix have been giving filmmakers more of a shot when it comes to longer films. Netflix's "The Irishman" clocks in at a long three hours and 30 minutes, and even Amazon Prime Video's "Sound of Metal" is over two hours long, which studios don't like to give to intimate productions as of late. With the clambering requests for Snyder's vision to be released and its strong opening weekend numbers, this could show studios that viewers are willing to sit through longer, original films if they're given the chance. This could be the making of a new age of original films if the studios listen.



Review: 'Cherry' smugly sours themes

By Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

Oftentimes, films are centered around a message or theme. Sometimes this message or theme comes through clear as crystal, carrying the film with a sense of purpose, no matter the runtime. Take Denis Villeneuve's "Blade Runner 2049" for example. Aside from the stellar performances, mind boggling set design and gorgeous cinematography, the film carries its message of finding one's worth so poignantly that this theme of self-worth is what cements that film in my memory. I wish I could say the same for "Cherry."

Based on a 2018 autobiography by Nico Walker, "Cherry" attempts to tell the tale of a nameless protagonist (played by Tom Holland) as he is consumed by the American system, from falling in love in college to becoming a victim of the opioid crisis. This is a real issue that needs to be discussed, but "Cherry" never feels focused on even bringing these issues up. The film is too focused on trying to make you think it's cool. Each moment in the film is so polished, that it feels like you're watching one of the Russo Brothers' Marvel movies. This is supposed to be a film about a soldier turned opioid addict, but every shot is so crisp, every actor is so perfectly dressed, every musical choice is so formulaic, you never forget you're watching a company product.

Another damning aspect of the film is nothing feels real. The characters, their actions, and the depictions of violence and drug use feel like no one involved has even stepped foot off of a Hollywood set. I'm not promoting drug use, but if a character in your film is experiencing the effects of hard drugs, someone in the process should have some kind of knowledge of how people on those drugs act.

Tom Holland is supposedly playing a character taking all kinds of drugs across his life, but acts like he only has a schoolboy's grasp on the matter and that goes for the whole cast. People on screen constantly talk about doing shady things in a manner I haven't seen since after school specials. Nothing but surface level, "drugs are bad" messages without coming close to tackling the issues that threw a staggering percentage of our country into the deadly arms of opioids. If that was the only thing that soured me, I could just write this film off as not knowing its material well enough. But, "Cherry" does all this with an infuriatingly smug tone.

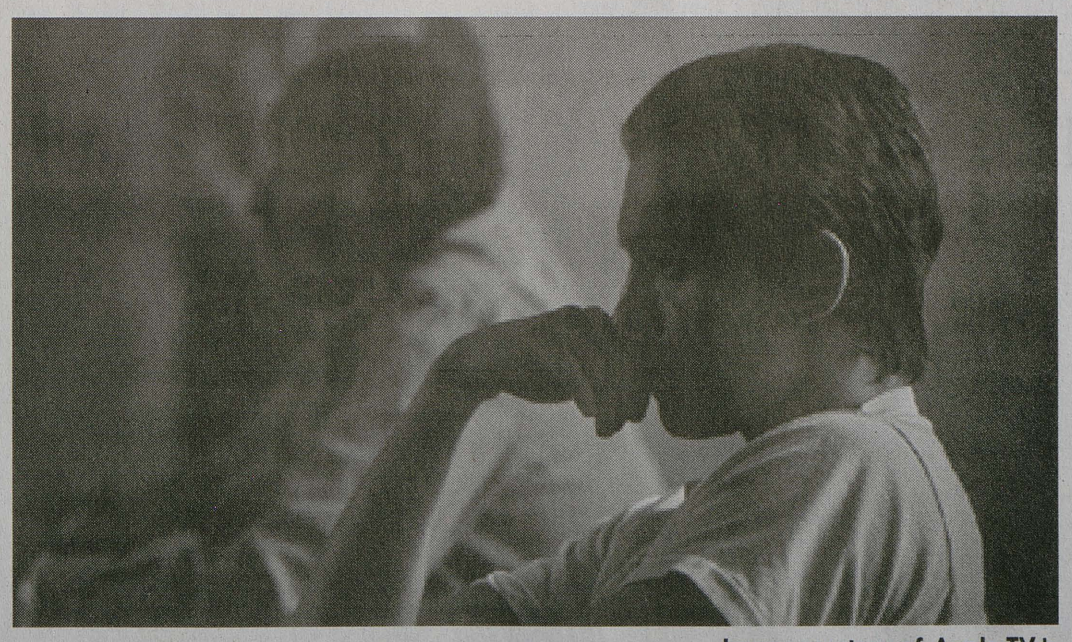


Image courtesy of Apple TV+

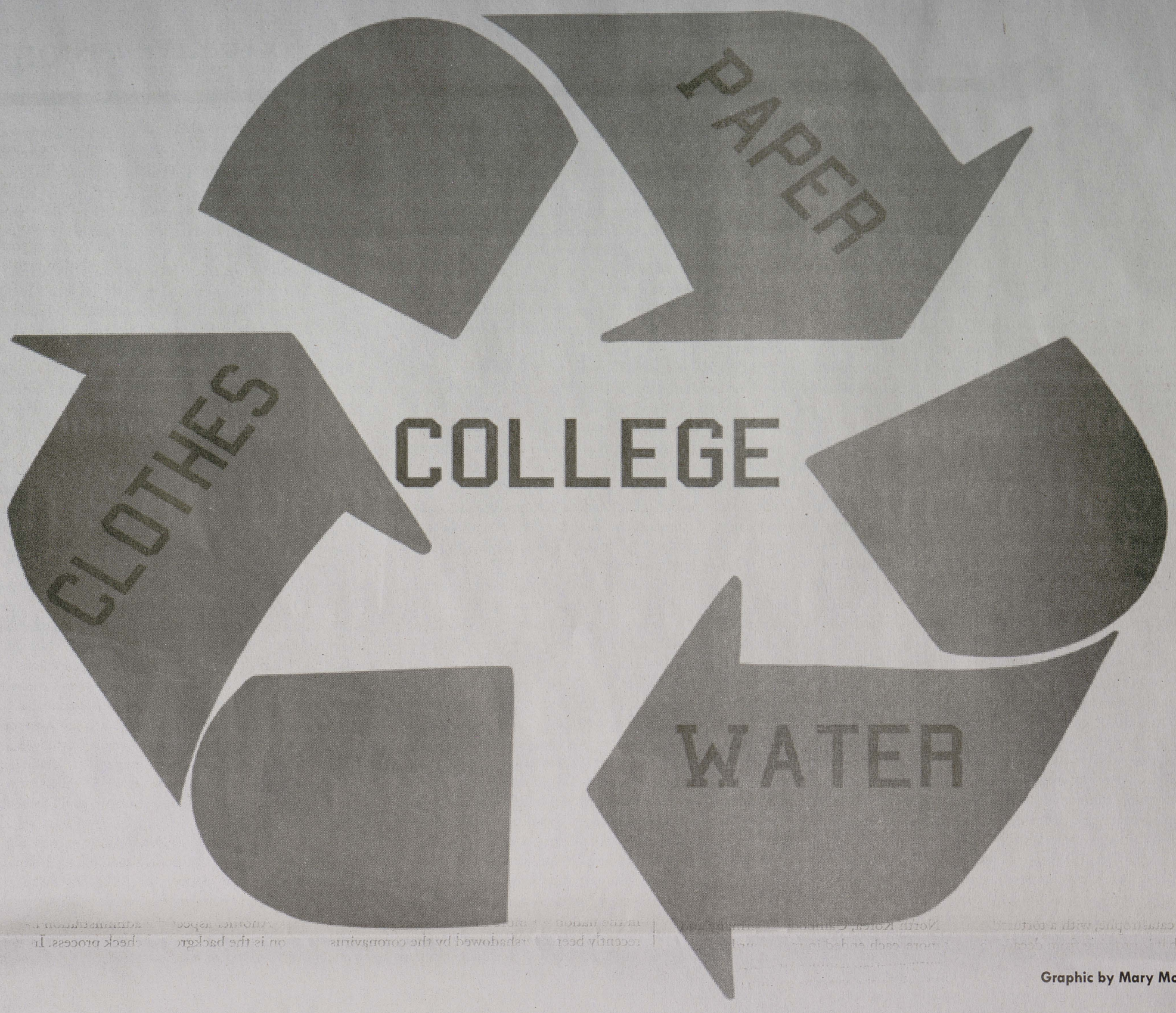
You see, this movie isn't satisfied with showing you a story of the American Dream harshly crashing down on a young man. It also wants you to know how much smarter it is than the whole system. There is an incessant narration by Holland throughout the film that carries the tone of a teenager. You know, that kid in your junior year class who spouts nothing but sentiments of "none of this matters, anyway," when presented with classwork.

Holland's "Cherry" is always attempting to wax poetic, but never reaches anything deeper than "don't join the army." This edgy, teenaged attitude is completely ignored when it comes to the aforementioned visual depiction. Even though the narration is condemning the army for being "little kids playing in costumes," the film is shot in a way that is obviously glorifying our troops committing travesties overseas. Triumphant, sweeping shots of Humvees carrying stoic, manly men who are out there doing masculine things with maximum cool factor. All the while Tom Holland is trying to tell you how stupid it all is.

My earlier mention of a back to school special might be the most apt comparison one can come up with. The issue is, an after-school special normally was 30 minutes on the long end. This is a two-and-a-half-hour slog that simultaneously preaches at you while forcing you to literally look out of Tom Holland's rectal cavity during a military physical. I wish I was making that last note up.

"Cherry" has had its short theatrical run and now is available for streaming on Apple TV+, but if you have the service and almost three hours to spare, maybe watch the animated treasure "WolfWallkers" and give an episode of "Ted Lasso" a shot instead.

Tips on being eco-friendly in college



Graphic by Mary Mone

By Mary Mone
Online and Copy Editor

Many college students struggle to be eco-friendly between all the prepackaged meals and the free handouts, but when simple steps are implemented into a daily routine, even the busiest college student can live green with these five simple steps.

The first thing any college student can do is be thrifty. In many college towns there are secondhand shops where students can find used furniture or even revamping old stuff you may already own. Not only does this save you money, but it can help with waste.

The second thing any college student can do is to unplug appliances. To cut down on wasted electricity and wasted dollars, simply use a power strip and turn the strip off when leaving the dorm.

The third eco-friendly strategy is cutting down on paper usage. On planetaid.org, they speak about the amount of waste a college student accumulates. "The average college student produces a whopping 640 pounds of trash annually, the majority of which accumulates at the end of the year during move-out." There are many ways to cut down on paper. One of the most obvious ways includes only printing what's necessary and using paper products that are made from 80%-100% recycled paper. According to greenerideal.com, "recycled products, especially paper products, are available in most stores now, and purchasing these items makes a big difference in the recycling industry. In many cases, they don't cost any more than traditional products either." Another way to cut down on paper is to use washable towels instead of paper towels.

The fourth way one can keep an eco-friendly lifestyle is to avoid water waste. There are many ways to conserve water including turning off the water when you're not using it. For example, one can turn the water off when putting shampoo in or when brushing their teeth. Another way to conserve water is to only do laundry when you have a full load, wasting the least amount of water you can per week.

The fifth way to live sustainability is to reuse and recycle. This way is over spoken in society, but when actually followed, it can be effective. According to princetonreview.com, "make it a point to buy products with recycled contents and/or recyclable packaging and start a backyard composting bin for yard clippings and donate your unwanted furniture, appliances, and clothing so that they may be reused."

As a college student, time is spread out in so many areas that it can be overwhelming trying to be eco-friendly. The way to start is to begin with little accessible things that can be implemented into a daily routine. Beginning with little things on the day to day will allow for a more eco-conscious lifestyle that will grow over time.

TJC Homecoming elections canceled but Senate elections will continue

Graphic by Michael Bald

By Michael Bald
Managing and Design Editor

The Tyler Junior College Elections Committee has decided to cancel Homecoming and its elections for the spring semester.

After the cancellation of Homecoming in the fall semester, the original plan was to have it in the spring. However, the Elections Committee has decided to cancel the event entirely.

"The Elections Committee is mainly focusing on Student Senate Elections and finding people to stand up for the executive vice president, executive president, secretary, public relations, all those positions," said Juan Lesser, Vice President of Student Senate.

Though Homecoming elections are canceled, Student Senate Elections will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 13. Voting Polls will be set up in Jenkins Hall and Rogers Student Center.

"We saw that we couldn't have Homecoming in the fall semester due to all the restrictions," Lesser said. "We wanted to do something in the spring hoping everything would calm down more but obviously it wasn't the ideal year to have Homecoming because of the administration putting all the restrictions on."

Lesser said he talked with Lauren Tyler, director of Student Life, about rescheduling in fall 2021.

"I've already talked to Lauren Tyler and she told me that the next homecoming would be held around October," Lesser said. "She wants a big festival, very excited for it. Unfortunately, me and most students won't be here to experience it."

The Elections Committee is designed to create procedures and standards for any elections happening at TJC.

"The Elections Committee is held to make it a smooth election to be run," Lesser said. "For the TJC student body, officers and also for homecoming king and queen."

Lesser said he and the officers tried to come up with alternatives to the situation, including working on events to line up with the release of the COVID-19 vaccines. "We talked within the officers about having a Spring Fling, like a one-time spring-homecoming thing," Lesser said. "But it didn't go around as fast so it didn't really work out in our favor."

Column: Tyler Junior College must enable pronouns in Canvas

By Brianna Murphy
News Editor

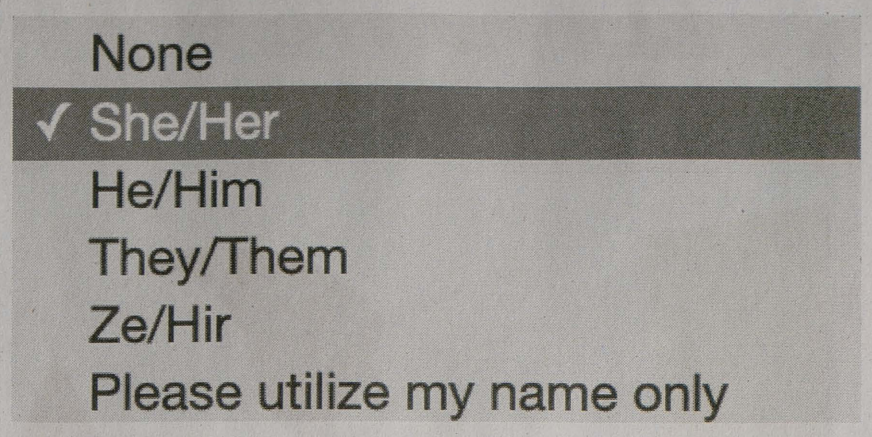


Photo courtesy of Chapman University: When enabled, pronouns are accessed through settings and are selected through a drop down tab in Canvas.

Minority groups of the LGBTQ+ community have been pushing for the acceptance of pronoun options on the online learning tool Canvas. Canvas allows institutions to enable a pronoun feature, in which students will be able to select their preferred pronouns for display. For heterosexual individuals, they face little difficulty in being referred to under their preferred pronouns. For members of the LGBTQ+ community, especially transgender and nonbinary persons, addressing pronouns is more tedious.

Cory Howard, psychology professor at TJC, said, "pronouns are an important way for someone to express their gender identity." Teachers and students can see these pronouns to prevent misgendering, but the display of pronouns is not mandatory. The pronouns will display next to users' name and on their profile. Nonbinary and transgender students are the highest targets for misgendering, which can affect their mental health. A study conducted by Stephen Russell, department chair of human development at the University of Texas at Austin, found that transgender youths who use their preferred name and pronouns have a lower rate of depression and suicide.

"For example, I use 'he/him' pronouns and would feel uncomfortable if someone referred to me as 'she/her,'" Howard said. Pronouns can help individuals feel acceptance through their gender identity and expression.

TJC currently has the pronouns feature disabled and I believe it is a big issue with an easy solution. "When someone is misgendered it is just a reminder that they are 'different,'" Howard said. "This can just add to the confusion and stress and anxiety they already feel in their day-to-day lives."

In addition, the popularization of pronoun use in school institutions can end the stigma for pronoun usage. Several members, including students, face discrimination for using pronouns that do not follow their assigned gender. The adaption of displaying pronouns for those outside of the LGBTQ+ community can help normalize the importance of pronouns for individuals and gender identity.

Students may feel uncomfortable with confronting a teacher in person about their preferred pronouns, in which case the pronoun feature allows students a universal option. Furthermore, in large classes, teachers may be susceptible to unintentionally forgetting pronouns. If TJC decides to enable the feature, they will leave the option up to students, as not to force students into displaying pronouns. The feature is primarily supporting transgender and nonbinary communities and with the growing number of LGBTQ+ students entering public community colleges, the resources for these communities must grow alongside them.

The University of Vermont in 2009 was the first school in the US to allow students the option of entering a preferred pronoun into campus systems. Several other universities and community colleges have followed suit, allowing students to express their gender identity on college services. Currently, TJC's Student Senate is writing a resolution to support enabling Canvas's pronoun options. From here, Faculty Senate will have the opportunity to review and add their support to the resolution before it is sent to administration. There are very few, if any negative side effects to passing the resolution, as people who do not have an opinion will not be affected in Canvas.

As a public community college, TJC should provide a welcoming community, both in-person and remotely, for LGBTQ+ students. "The benefit to our TJC students would be that their professors would know ahead of time what pronouns they prefer, so less mistakes would be made," Howard said. Regarding TJC's LGBTQ+ community, the pronouns feature has the power to help students feel a greater acceptance.

Column: Nihilism's rise fuels social emptiness

By Michael Bald
Managing and Design Editor

In 1901, in philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's book "The Will to Power" he writes: "I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism...Our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade."

Nihilism by definition is the rejection of all religious and moral principle in the belief that life is meaningless. As Nietzsche predicted, it feels as if our Western societies have been moving further toward a nihilistic worldview. Cultural aspects from shows like "Rick and Morty," self-deprecating memes, people growing accustomed to post-modern philosophies and the current pandemic, it feels as if there is an existential crisis in the world.

But how did it start? And what will it lead to?

Nietzsche's main point in his analysis of the next two centuries was without the role of religion, the West would fall prey to nihilism and rigid ideologies. Though he was an atheist and heavily scorned Christianity, he understood the importance of the idea of God and his foundation in our civilization.

According to news.gallup.com, a international analytics firm for religious people, Christianity has been on the decline in the U.S. for the past two decades. A Gallup poll shows people who are not religious or aren't sure, are around 23% of the population. An overall 13% decrease in church membership since the late 90s and early 2000s. Though this does show that at least 77% of the population still regularly attends church, that doesn't mean as a culture, we uphold the Judeo-Christian values our culture was based upon anymore.

I think it's safe to say almost every aspect of our lives have been infiltrated by politics and it doesn't matter which side of the aisle is speaking. It is always there in sports, movies, podcasts, social media, books and music. Every aspect of culture has gotten increasingly more political, with each side growing more frustrated at each other. Why is this though? Well, this is where capitalism can come into play. With capitalism comes consumer culture and fierce competition. With that comes the only sense for a meaning in one's life. However, over time individuals will still feel unsatisfied even with an abundance of the newest furniture, clothing and technology. With that void trying to be filled, people will react in different ways as Nietzsche predicted.

This is where I believe the Marxist ideology starts to form. A society without a sense of purpose or faith would head quickly into the construction of authoritarianism disguised as supposed utopias or just pure anarchy.

During the 19th century, multiple countries took inspiration from the philosophy of Marxism and implemented it into their countries. It also gave rise to the most oppressive systems to human rights in history. From Russia, North Korea, Cambodia, Germany and more, each ended in mass murder and authoritarian regimes. Yet, there is still a push in the West to try and adopt this clearly flawed system in hopes of achieving paradise. According to buisnessinsider.com, 70% of millennials and 64% of Gen-Z would be somewhat or extremely likely to vote for a socialist. Either because they draw false examples of it working somewhere and think they can implement it here or the typical "that wasn't real socialism and we'll do it right this time" statement. This is basically saying if they were in Mao Zedong or Fidel Castro's shoes they would have brought in the perfect society because nobody in the past 100 years knew Marxism but they do.

It's narcissism of the purest kind.

I could write an entirely separate article on why Marxism will never work but it basically puts the importance of the collective over the individual. I'm not saying that collectivism is bad. Christianity in its teachings teaches a lot about giving to the needy and helping others. The difference between Christianity and Marxism is actually quite simple: free will. Marxism demands participation and sacrifice from everyone in a given society.

Resulting in things every time being carried out by the barrel of a gun.

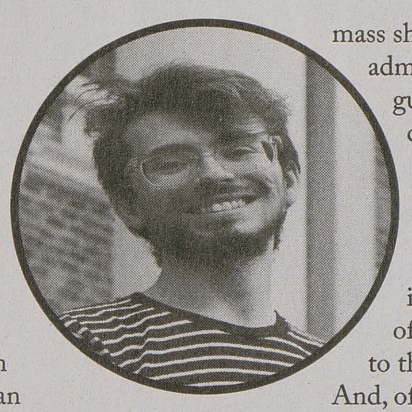
Even KGB informer turned defector, Yuri Bezmenov, said in a lecture that in order to subvert a country into a Marxist ideology the first thing they went after in each country was religion. "The moment they lost religion, as simple as that, they disintegrated," Bezmenov said. "Something not material (God) moves society and helps it to survive."

Even though this article sounds like atheists can't be moral that's not the argument I'm making. Atheists can absolutely be moral. But a society not based on religion, specifically Judeo-Christian values, cannot justify morality and will inevitably lead to self-destruction.

Nietzsche had another prediction for the future and the consequences of a godless society. "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe the blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves?"

Column: Biden's assault rifle ban misses the regulatory mark

By Chris Swann
Staff Photographer



Background checks and the banning of assault weapons with large capacity magazines are not going to be enough to incite real change. In the aftermath of the Boulder and Atlanta shootings, President Joe Biden has made his viewpoint on assault rifles clear to the American people. Gun reform has been a major issue in the nation for more than a decade but has recently been overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic. Now, this issue has taken the forefront once again.

Biden in a speech on March 23 urged Congress to pass legislation banning assault weapons, expanding background checks and closing loopholes. "This is not and should not be a partisan issue," he said. "This is an American issue. It will save lives - American lives - and we have to act."

Biden specifically mentioned a Clinton era banning of assault weapons and large capacity magazines (LCM), which brought down the frequency of mass shootings in the U.S. However, that claim is difficult to assess.

The ban only lasted from 1994 to 2004 and the relative yearly count of mass shootings was low, but the impact of the legislation is difficult to determine.

According to a 2004 study for the Department of Justice, the ban's impact on gun violence was muddled. The report says, "Should [the legislation] be renewed, the ban's effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best and perhaps too small for reliable measurement." The report also mentions assault weapons were rarely used in gun crimes even before the ban.

In fact, the report mentioned the potential for more dangerous individuals to have access to assault weapons with LCMs should the ban be lifted. Saying, "pre-ban assault weapons may lose value and novelty, prompting some of their owners to sell them in undocumented secondhand markets where they can more easily reach high-risk users, such as criminals, terrorists and other potential mass murderers."

A 2020 report by Christopher Koper, a professor of criminology, law and society at George Mason University and the same author of the 2004 DOJ report, confirmed this by saying, "The federal ban on assault weapons and LCMs of 1994 had exemptions and loopholes that limited its short-term effects, but its expiration in 2004 was followed by an increase in the use of these weapons in mass shootings and other crimes."

The low ratio of assault weapons being used in gun violence crimes still carries to this day. According to 2017 FBI Data, handguns are the most commonly used weapons in shootings in the U.S. at 64%. While assault rifles are used in many shootings around the nation, handguns are still the leading weapon in many of these cases. Not to mention that mass shootings are a tiny proportion of all gun deaths in the U.S. According to the BBC, of the 38,658 people who died in the U.S. in 2016, 1,305 were accidental deaths and war casualties, 22,938 were suicides and 14,415 were homicides - of which 71 died in mass shootings. That's 0.5% of all homicides in the U.S.

Banning assault rifles and LCMs most likely would not result in a decrease of yearly mass shootings in the U.S. If the administration wanted to thoroughly guarantee a decrease in gun-related deaths, a ban of all weapons would have to be legislated – handguns, shotguns, rifles, etc. But such a move in the U.S. is absolutely unthinkable, as 50% of all self-identified Republicans and 18% of Democrats own guns, according to the global analytics firm Gallup. And, of course, the second amendment protects American's rights to bear arms.

Another aspect the administration has focused on is the background check process. In states with universal background checks, a criminal background check is done every time a sale has been made. It's up to the state's legislature to enact universal background checks and not the federal government. Only 22 states (plus the District of Columbia) have laws that require universal background checks for some private sales of firearms, which is part of the problem.

A study published in the Journal Injury Prevention in 2012 found nearly 80% of all firearms used for criminal purposes are obtained through transfers from unlicensed dealers, which are not required to conduct background checks in what's called the "private sale loophole." In 2017, a study by researchers from Northern University and the Harvard School of Public Health showed 22% of Americans who had obtained a gun in the previous two years did not undergo a background check process.

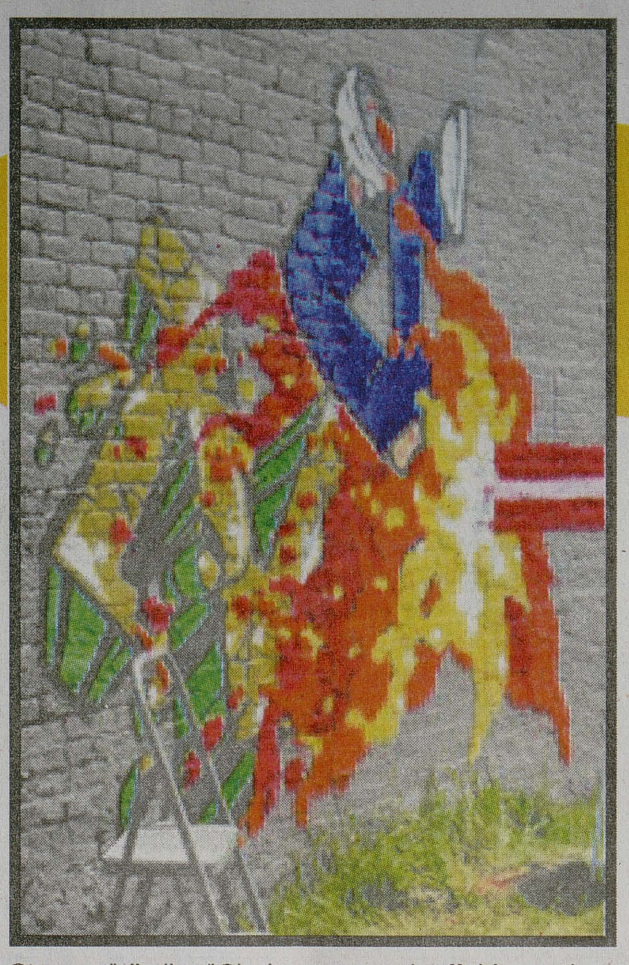
While this is an issue, research is mixed on whether or not stricter background checks alone correlate with a decrease in gun-related deaths. For example, the California had enacted universal background check legislation for 10 years. Researchers at UC Davis School of Medicine have studied gun violence in California during that period and found there was no change in the number of gun homicides or gun suicides. Another study by the same authors found the repeal of universal background check laws in Tennessee and Indiana had no effect on gun homicides or suicides in either state.

While research is divided on background checks, and there seems to be no clear answer on how to go about the issue, several studies have shown coupling gun laws together can actually make a difference.

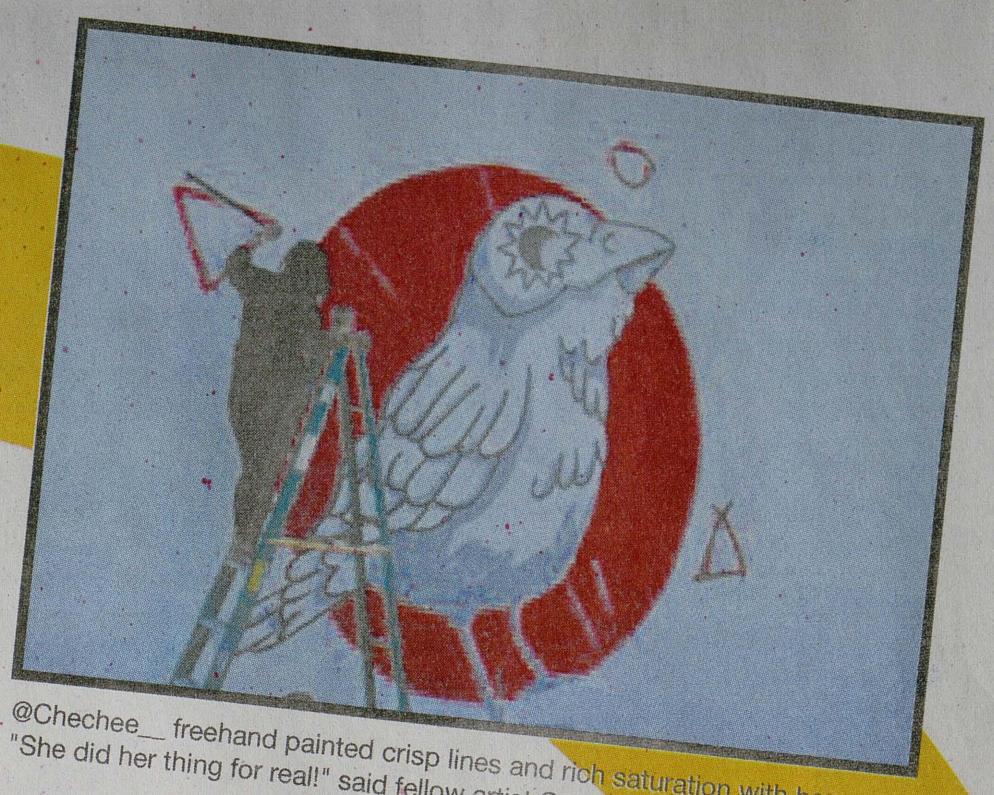
In 2016, a study by researchers at Columbia University found a combination of laws, like licensing/permit requirements, limiting the number of guns you can purchase monthly/annually, minimum age restrictions, mental health screenings and background checks have had success in decreasing gun violence. Examples of such legislation are found in Australia and Maryland with the 1996 National Firearms Agreement and the 1996 Maryland Gun Violence Act, which respectively have had the most successful results in reducing gun-related deaths.

There is still much debate over whether or not stricter gun laws will make a substantial difference in decreasing gun-related deaths and mass shootings. After all, even with strict gun laws, criminals still have alternative methods without guns to cause harm. Like in the Middle East with large scale bombings, or in the United Kingdom with poison gas attacks, just to name a few examples. But sitting idly and not trying to figure out a way to limit the options criminals have will cost many more lives in the future.

DOWNTOWN TYLER'S NEW MAKEOVER



Steven, "djstibs,"Cipriano capped off this section of a building-long piece with an explosion of color.



@Chechee__ freehand painted crisp lines and rich saturation with her art. "She did her thing for real!" said fellow artist Gemini.

Cafe 1948's coffee trailer brewed up savory delectables at the festival. They were one of many local vendors offering food and drinks.

Street artists welcome East Texans into their world

Photos and story by Chris Crymes
Entertainment Editor

From artist DPhillGood inviting families to his make-your-own-art painting stations to Lupita's food truck to street artists "tagging" walls with freehand art, the streetside corner at 407 N. Spring Ave was recently turned from parking lot to arthouse with the Vertically Inclined Street Art Festival.

The festival as a whole was quite the collaborative effort.

"Everyone did their part and made this a collective to the cause. I'm so proud to show the community this world," said Gemini, artist and founder of Vertically Inclined.

The founder of the event wasn't the only one excited about the festival. Artists involved were eager to share their love for the event.

"Creativity was all around us and the energy was insane! Loved every bit of it from the street artists, the vendors, the music, everything. The community really came out and enjoyed themselves and that's what we wanted," said DPhillGood, local artist at Vertically Inclined.

According to Gemini, the festival spawned from a previous get together he had in the same space for a friend's birthday. When out looking for places to create his street art on a rainy day, he came across the parking lot behind Rudy's Barber Shop in Downtown Tyler and he instantly fell in love.

"When we got the day to start the pieces, he (Rudy) decided he wanted to have a whole thing out of it," Gemini said. "We had a taco truck, it was his birthday, invited some people out, the vibe was amazing, and the pieces that went up that day were awesome."

From there, he had the idea to do the same thing, only bigger. After that, Gemini and his crew started surveying the space and making phone calls.

"Once we had the artists on board, things just started falling into place," Gemini said.

After the artists became involved, Gemini and company invited local businesses to take part. Those seen on site on March 20 included 20 artists, Café 1948, Lupita's food truck, a bounce house, DPhillGood's family painting station, and a number of East Texas local vendors selling apparel and jewelry. Another crowd favorite was the appearance of the Unicos Car Club's custom lowriders.

"That was one aspect I was really looking forward to and I'm so glad they showed up," Gemini said. "Like street art, that's just another culture a lot of people haven't been exposed to. This way they can be a part of this culture, not just look at it but engage with it and embrace it."

After the success of Vertically Inclined, Gemini is looking to the future for more, even bigger street art events for the East Texas art community.

"Engaging in this art, for me, is a sense of empowerment. The whole culture has this unique thing about it," he said. "Something about how anyone can drive around and see your art, so any messages you have to say or any voice you choose to give the community, you can know it's going to be noticed, and I'm ready to keep this energy going."

Unicos Car Club showcases their classic lowriders. Unicos is a Tyler classic car club serving the community for over 10 years.

This wound up being the tallest piece at the festival. Artist A. Breffitt painted his piece while perched on a ladder high above the crowds.

A juggler entertains growing crowds early in the day. Throughout the day, jugglers synced to live music.

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